

SONS OF LIBERTY FARM

Liberty Corner, N.J.

Patrick Henry's Birthday

May 29, 1997

For delivery at dusk, Memorial Day, May 30, 1997

Greetings neighbors from the Sons of Liberty Farm at The Liberty Corner!

In Patrick Henry's famous speech of March 23, 1775 he wrote this which is even more apropos today: "The issue is nothing less than freedom and slavery! -- Should I not express my opinions at this time I would consider it as an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven which I revere above all earthly kings."

In Patrick Henry's Will he wrote, "I ~~give~~^{have} now given to my family all of my property. There is one more thing which I wish that I could give to them. If I had given to them all the world and they did not have that one thing they would be poor however if I had given them nothing and they had that one thing they would be wealthy. That one thing is the Christian religion!"

A few days ago I learned that, like myself, Patrick Henry was educated by a very loving father. May I conclude this message with a very special thanks, memorial and prayer to our loving Father^s who have marched before us in that Eternal Battle To Set Men Free.

Dear Heavenly Father,

We graciously thank you for rallying our concerned courageous caring fathers who shed their blood and lives for us.

May we at this time rededicate ourselves to follow in your footsteps as we exhilaratingly charge into those storm clouds which again are rapidly engulfing us.

We shall proudly raise high our Constitutional Banner which negatively orders, "Involuntary servitude shall not exist excepting for duly convicted criminals" and your Supreme Banner which positively proclaims, "Voluntary servitude shall exist" which is Christian Love (Charity)"!

We do extol and honor Thee as our only Sovereign!

In Jesus name we do hereby proclaim!

A M E N

Irwin L. Richardt

Irwin L. Richardt

PATRIOTS' SONGS

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

O say can you see
by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd
at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars,
through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd
were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare,
the bombs bursting in the air,
Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there.
Oh, say, does the Star-Spangled
Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave.

Oh, thus be it ever,
when free men shall stand,
Between their lov'd homes
and war's desolation!
Blest with vict'ry and peace,
may the Heav'n rescued land
Praise the power that hath made
and preserved us a nation!

And conquer we must,
when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto:
"In God is our trust."
And the Star-Spangled Banner
in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave.

MARCH ON, MARCH ON FOR JERSEY

March on, march on for Jersey,
And sing a loyal song,
And let the winds of Jersey
Transport our praise along.
We love our faithful rivers,
Her templed mountains free,
We love the Jersey meadows
That greet the rolling sea.

March on, march on for Jersey
With hearts and voices high,
For on the soil of Jersey
True heroes dared to die;

The faith that blazed at Trenton
Filled all the land with light,
And crowned the Blue of Jersey,
A leader for the right.

March on, march on for Jersey,
Be glad in toil and play
With strength of hills and heroes
March on and win today;
From Jersey comes our courage,
From Jersey, faith to stand,
And we will live for Jersey
With head and heart and hand.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purpled mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassion'd stress,
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control
Thy liberty in law.

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

Sons of Liberty Farm

Liberty Corner, NJ



Dating to 1700s, original homestead of Allen family, for which Allen Road is named.

The Colonial-era farmhouse was 'modernized' in 1927, including the shed addition on the rear, with indoor bathroom, and upgraded electric service. The house remains virtually unchanged since the 1920s, retaining its porcelain electric sconces, 'Swirl' plaster on the living room walls, green and cream paint on the woodwork, and Art Deco patterned linoleum on the floors!



The Farm was purchased from the Josiah Allen estate by John W. Richardt, his wife and three sons in 1928. John Richardt was blind, and made his living as a piano tuner. As the piano was replaced by radio as family entertainment, John adapted by becoming a radio repairman in the 1930s, and then a television repairman in the 1950s. Amazingly, John built the barn on the property in the 1930s -he was still blind, remember!- but he was most noted for his ham radio Amateur License W2VJZ, and his 650 foot tall transmitting tower.

Irwin Richardt ~ A One-Man Crusade

Following his father John's death, Irwin Richardt continued the television repair service until gradually replacing it with maple sugaring and syrup production as his sole source of income. For many years, Irwin conducted a tour of his maple syrup production to local first-grade students, explaining each step in the process, punctuated with his own unique wit and witticism. Irwin was a true patriot - believing in the United States Constitution as it was originally written and limited government. He was well educated and well read; with the writings of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin forming the backbone of his extensive library.



Irwin was best-known locally for his simple, primitive way of life, his refusal to concede his convictions regarding government 'interference' - even going to jail on several occasions!- and for his hand-lettered signs and billboards warning his neighbors and passersby of the evils of large government that no longer obeyed the precepts set forth in the Constitution.

Please read below the well-written obituary published in the *Bernardsville News*:

‘End of an Era’ in Liberty Corner

Lifelong Bernards Township farmer Irwin Richardt, 78, dies following long illness

By W. JACOB PERRY Staff Writer December 28, 2006

BERNARDS TWP. Irwin L. Richardt of Liberty Corner, whose colonial-era lifestyle and tireless crusade to uphold the nation's founding principles made him a local celebrity, died on Friday night, Dec. 22, after a long illness. Mr. Richardt, 78, had been suffering from prostate cancer and died in his sleep at about 8 p.m. at the Somerville Road home of Andrew and Kelly Dietsch, two friends who had been caring for him for about a month.

A bachelor, Mr. Richardt lived in an 18th century farmhouse at his boyhood home, the 22-acre Sons of Liberty Farm at Allen and Somerville roads. He also owned a farm in New York's Adirondacks. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 29, at the Fellowship Deaconry Chapel at 3575 Valley Road in Liberty Corner. A viewing is scheduled at the chapel at 10 a.m. that day followed by a committal service at the Sons of Liberty Farm.

Mr. Richardt was a maple syrup farmer who for 40 years gained local renown for quoting the founding fathers and crusading against what he saw as unjust taxes, intrusive laws and government control. A student of the U.S. Constitution, he derided taxes and regulations as violating the 13th Amendment, which prohibits involuntary servitude.

Though a soft spoken and devotedly religious man who gave tours of his farm to school children, he made his points in strong, provocative language in scores of letters to this newspaper, statements at public meetings or on hand-painted signs at his farm. For many years, a large sign at the corner of his property read, "That U.S. flag represents one thing, the U.S. Constitution. Obey it or be cited for treason." He also held regular bonfires on New Year's Eve and on the birthdays of Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Andrew Jackson, among others, even though he was often fined for burning without a permit. One year he held his own version of the Boston Tea Party by burning government-issued cheese.

‘A Unique Man’

Some township officials viewed him as a nuisance or a crackpot, but many others respected or even admired his principled if unorthodox approach. "He demonstrated that there really was a role in society for a man who was independent and who rigorously held his position and articulated his views, which he did well," said former Township Committeeman Bill Allen. "He stuck to those ideas, and at a strong price

to himself,” Allen added. “I had a great deal of admiration for him. “He was a unique man – probably as unique as any I’ve ever known. I’ll miss him. “He represents a vanishing species – people who hold very strong views that differed from most of his fellow citizens but he sticks with them.” Former Police Chief Charles J. Fortenbacher had known Mr. Richardt since 1936, having been two years behind him at Liberty Corner School. “He was a very intelligent person,” Fortenbacher recalled. “He was different, a little eccentric, but we were friends. He stood on his principles and I have to admit, a lot of his principles I agreed with. “This is the end of an era, it really is.”

Mr. Richardt’s decision in later life to travel by bicycle – itself resulting from his principled stance against automobile insurance – made him one of the area’s most recognizable figures. Easily distinguished by white hair tied into a small ponytail, he could be seen peddling briskly on virtually any main road in town throughout the 1990s. Mr. Richardt’s life was essentially an open book, with his many letters to this newspaper touching not only on his views but on his travels and encounters with people. He was generally known by his first name, and even those who did not know him would often talk about whatever “Irwin” was up to. His uniqueness landed in him the “Weird N.J.” book, published by Barnes & Noble in 2003. In a two-page spread, he was referred to as “a self-described Jeffersonian constitutionalist” whose “mind and lifestyle seem to be a throwback to the late 1700s.” He also broadcast his views on a ham radio, and through that venue, made friends throughout the Northeast.

Native Son

Mr. Richardt grew up on a farm that his parents purchased in 1928 from the estate of Josiah Allen (1843-1906), for whom Allen Road is named. His father was a blind piano tuner who became well known locally.

In a 1982 interview with this newspaper, Mr. Richardt cited his father as influencing his views on limited government. “My father almost worshipped Jefferson,” he said. Initially, he had a television and radio repair business, but he left that pursuit in 1968 to farm his land, where he tapped syrup from maple trees.

Mr. Richardt’s political activism was apparent by the late 1960s. One of his early crusades was against the school district’s plan for what he called “public” sex education. In a pattern that became familiar, his arguments quoted the founding fathers and cited passages in the U.S. Constitution. But he was seldom on the same wavelength with public officials. In July 1969, then-school board member Richard Hancock protested, “We are elected to administer a school district, not to be lectured on Jefferson once a week.” Mr. Richardt also tangled with officials over taxes. Although he qualified for a farmland tax assessment, he didn’t believe in providing receipts for his farm produce. As a result, for the better part of 40 years, the township would annually deny the assessment, and then Mr. Richardt would appeal to state Tax Court and win a lower assessment.

One of his more celebrated battles involved automobile insurance. Through the 1980s, he drove around in a converted 1955 school bus that was painted red, white and blue, with a quote from Thomas Jefferson on both sides and a picture of George Washington in one window. But Mr. Richardt refused to take out auto insurance, maintaining that being forced to buy protection from insurance companies was unconstitutional. For years, whenever police would stop his bus and ask for insurance credentials, he would hand over a Bible, saying it was the only protection he needed. He was convicted of driving without insurance in March 1986, and as a result he was sent to the Somerset County Jail that December to serve 100 days. That sentence was later reduced to 65 days for good behavior, and he was released in February 1987. He remained opposed to auto insurance and apparently never drove again.

Condemnation Battle

He also fought the township over its attempts to condemn strips of his “sacred” land for road improvements, first in 1989 when Allen Road was widened, and again in 1999 when Somerville Road was widened. Although he had no known record of violence, Mr. Richardt alarmed township officials with his letters against the Somerville Road project, in which he said anyone who seized his land was guilty of treason and deserved to be executed. The letters were turned over to the Somerset County Prosecutor’s

Office, but no action was taken because the language was general in nature and targeted no specific individuals.

Nevertheless, in October 1999, Mr. Richardt was jailed for several days after he allegedly interfered with the road project by tossing surveying stakes off his property. The arrest generated widespread sympathy, and in the Nov. 2, 1999, general election, he received an unprecedented 532 write-in votes for the Township Committee. Mr. Richardt was subsequently fined \$455 in Municipal Court, but not before stating his peace. At one point, he told the court that many people had offered him tips on how to “beat” the system. “I am not here to beat the system,” he declared. “I am here to restore the system.” The township wrote out checks to Mr. Richardt to compensate him for the land lost to both the Allen Road and Somerville Road projects but out of principle, he refused to cash either one.

In recent years, as Mr. Richardt became increasingly conscious of his mortality, he focused on efforts to preserve his farm after his death. Through the years, he scoffed at developers’ offers that would have made him a millionaire. He once said that selling his farm would be like “selling my mother.” In the fall of 2004, he announced plans to preserve the farm by turning it into a “farmer patriots” memorial park in which about 30 gravesites, including his own, would be spread around to prevent development. Although state officials said he would need an approval, Mr. Richardt characteristically said he was going ahead anyway. He held a public ceremony to bury the ashes of a friend, Claude Poli, on the property, but never buried any actual remains. Mr. Richardt was adamant that the farm not fall into the hands of the government, even as parkland or dedicated open space. He was equally insistent on not selling to corporations, and turned down overtures from churches and schools because they had incorporated for tax purposes. In his last interview on Monday, Dec. 18, he said legal arrangements to preserve the property were still in progress.

Mr. Richardt is survived by a brother, John W. Richardt Jr. of Hackettstown, and two nieces, Sharon Richardt of Hackettstown and Cheryl Richardt of Fort Monmouth. He was predeceased by a brother, Robert Richardt, who was killed in service during World War II. Mr. Richardt was a virtual encyclopedia of quotations, but two in particular were known to be among his favorites. One was from Benjamin Franklin, who said, “Those who would give up liberty for safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” The other was from Mr. Richardt’s hero, Jefferson, who said, “Timid men prefer the calm of despotism to the tempestuous sea of liberty.”

Be sure to visit [Liberty Corner **](#) for information regarding an upcoming documentary film on Irwin Richardt, as well as further information and news clippings.**

**A Few Highlights of the Estate Auction conducted May 2007
by Col. Matthew Lieb at www.NJauctions.net.**





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